Ministry
of
Education
Ontario

Chris Ward, Minister
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CANADIAN STUDIES – GEOGRAPHY

A Report Card for Ontario

PROVINCIAL REVIEWS

CANADIAN STUDIES GEOGRAPHY

Program
Implementation
and Review Branch

CANADIAN STUDIES – GEOGRAPHY

The Canadian Studies–Geography course contains aims and objectives dealing with both knowledge about Canada and the development of specific skills. The course is designed to develop students' abilities to solve problems and to give students a positive attitude towards Canada, its culture, and its society. The course is compulsory and is taken by most students in their first or second year of secondary school.

What is a provincial review?

Provincial reviews are conducted by the Ministry of Education to assess the quality of programs or courses in schools. The review in Canadian Studies–Geography was carried out in 1987 and involved, for the first time, a direct assessment of student achievement as part of the review process. This report card presents a summary of the results of this review.

Who provided the information for the review?

Information was collected from school boards, schools, teachers, and students. Twenty-six school boards with 138 schools, 2 private schools, 399 teachers, and 16 519 students participated. There were 11 192 students involved in the review who were taking the course at the advanced level of instruction; 5327 of the students involved were taking the course at the general level of instruction. Individual students and teachers were not identified in the review results.

Sample Questions From the Review

Several questions used in the student-assessment section of the review have been included in this report card. Each question is designed to measure knowledge about Canada or the ability to use specific skills. Under each question are four boxes.

I)	II)	III)	IV)
91	68	96	78
GENERAL		ADVANCED	

From left to right, the boxes indicate the following:

I) **the percentage of general-level course teachers who indicated that students had the opportunity to learn the knowledge or skills required to answer the question correctly**

II) **the percentage of students in the general-level course who answered the question correctly**

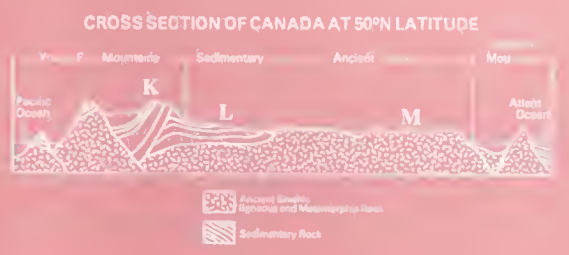
III) **the percentage of advanced-level course teachers who indicated that students had the opportunity to learn the knowledge or skills required to answer the question correctly**

IV) **the percentage of students in the advanced-level course who answered the question correctly**

The correct answer for each question can be found on the last page of this report card.

1. **The landforms in the diagram that have been most strongly influenced by folding in the region are represented by:**

   A. letter K.
   C. letter M.
   B. letter L.
   D. letter N.



91	68	96	78
GENERAL		ADVANCED	

Canada's geologic structure is indicated in this cross-sectional diagram. The study of geologic processes such as mountain building is part of the course.

2. **Most of the natural gas used in Ontario comes from:**

   A. Nova Scotia.
   C. Alberta.
   B. Saskatchewan.
   D United States.

65	55	69	66
GENERAL		ADVANCED	

Canada's energy-related resources and Ontario's suppliers of resources are key knowledge components of the course.

What kinds of information about Canadian Studies–Geography were collected?

The review collected information about the following:

- courses of study prepared at the school board or school level outlining learning objectives, teaching strategies, and evaluation techniques
- the teaching methods used in Canadian Studies–Geography classrooms and evaluation techniques used by teachers in their assessment of student progress
- the classroom resources used in the teaching of specific parts of the course
- student responses to questions concerning their knowledge about Canadian geography and their familiarity with, and use of, geographic skills
- information to indicate teacher and student attitudes towards geography in general and the Canadian Studies–Geography course in particular

Although the review examined all of these areas, this report card is limited to reporting on student achievement, student attitudes, and teacher coverage of the course objectives.

What aspects of the Canadian Studies–Geography course were included in the review?

The course involves a study of the physical features of Canada, the people who live here, and their attitudes towards their land and society. Students investigate the local community, regions within Canada, and Canada as a whole, including topics that focus on patterns of economic and cultural development.

A major part of the review involved an examination of student performance in ten content and skills areas. These areas represent eighteen of the twenty-two objectives of the course as outlined in the provincial guideline. The course encompasses the following seven content areas, which involve knowledge about Canada, and three skills areas:

Content

A. information about the local community
B. the extent of Canada and its location in the world
C. the physical geography of Canada
D. Canada's renewable and non-renewable resources
E. the distribution of population within Canada
F. the relationships among transportation, industrialization, technology, and changes in society
G. energy supply in Canada

3. The area located in what is termed a *rain shadow* is found at:

A. 2.
C. 4.
B. 3.
D. 5.

92	52	98	73
GENERAL		ADVANCED	

The study of weather and climate is part of the course. Weather patterns along Canada's Western Cordillera are particularly striking and of interest to students.

4. In which of the following regions of Canada is the population evenly distributed but of low density?

A. Cape Breton Island
B. Southern Saskatchewan
C. Fraser River Delta
D. Golden Horseshoe

51	42	58	47
GENERAL		ADVANCED	

This question measures students' general knowledge of Canada and its regions and of the ideas concerning density and distribution.

5. Petroleum is one of the fossil fuels. It is found in:

A. volcanic rocks.
B. igneous rocks.
C. sedimentary rocks.
D. meteoritic rocks.

48	47	70	66
GENERAL		ADVANCED	

The relationship between Canada's geologic structure and economic minerals, such as fossil fuels, is examined in this question.

Skills

H. the use of topographic maps and air photographs
I. the construction of maps and graphs to illustrate various aspects of geography
J. the use of statistics in geography

In addition to the seven content and three skills areas indicated above, students were asked about their understanding of different cultures and environmental issues. Students' attitudes towards the study of geography and Canada were also reviewed.

How was student performance measured?

Students responded to questions related to all ten content and skills areas. The questions were obtained from the Ontario Assessment Instrument Pool, a large, open set of questions previously distributed to all school boards.

How well did students perform in the review?

Students taking the advanced-level course responded correctly to 66 per cent of the questions; students taking the general-level course responded correctly to 52 per cent of the questions. Much of the difference in achievement between students taking the course at the general level of instruction and those taking the course at the advanced level of instruction can be explained by:

- the differences in ability between the two groups of students;
- differences in course coverage. At the advanced level, the geography necessary to answer 73 per cent of the questions had been taught; the corresponding figure for the general level was 66 per cent;
- the difference in the amount of class time spent teaching objectives. Class time was not specified in the guideline and varied widely among the classes involved in the review.

Schools may teach the course over a full year or concentrate the course in a half-year or a semester. There was no difference in achievement between students in semestered schools and those in which the course was offered over a full year.

Were there differences in student achievement among the content and skills areas reviewed?

Yes. Graphs 1 and 2 in this report (see back cover) provide information about the level of student achievement in each of the seven content areas and three skills areas.

6. The following diagrams show contour lines in four different patterns. The contour interval is the same in each diagram. Which of the diagrams represents the flattest land?

A.

B.

C.

D.

83	81	93	93
GENERAL		ADVANCED	

Elevation is shown by many methods on different types of maps. On most Canadian topographic maps, it is shown by contours. Students interpret contour patterns to understand the features of our landscape.

7. Which one of the following would be most useful in identifying a manufacturing region?

A. statistics on the percentage of the work force employed in industry

B. statistics on the birth rate and the death rate

C. statistics on the net rural-urban migration

D. statistics on the availability of hydro-electricity

80	39	87	53
GENERAL		ADVANCED	

In studying the economic patterns of Canada, students learn the characteristics of manufacturing regions and the tools used to define these regions.

Answers to questions

1. (A)
2. (C)
3. (D)
4. (B)
5. (C)
6. (C)
7. (A)

The four islands shown on the front cover of this report are (from left to right) Baffin Island, Manitoulin Island, Cape Breton Island, and Vancouver Island.

Was student performance satisfactory?

Yes. An analysis of the results was carried out by a Provincial Interpretation Panel consisting of practising geography teachers, department heads and co-ordinators, and representatives of various groups, including principals, supervisory officers, faculties of education, and trustees. The panel was satisfied with student achievement in seven of the ten content and skills areas and singled out the following areas in which achievement was particularly strong:

- the extent of Canada and its location in the world (*for students in both the general- and the advanced-level courses*)
- the construction of maps and graphs to illustrate various aspects of geography (*for students in the advanced-level course*)
- the skills associated with the use of topographic maps and air photographs (*for students in the advanced-level course*)

The Provincial Interpretation Panel felt that student achievement should have been stronger in the following three areas:

- information about the local community (*for students in both the general- and the advanced-level courses*)
- energy supply in Canada (*for students in both the general- and the advanced-level courses*)
- the use of statistics in geography (*for students in the advanced-level course*)

How did students feel about the course?

Over 85 per cent of students reported that the course had improved:

- their understanding of Canada's relationships with other countries;
- their pride in Canada.

Over 90 per cent of students reported that the course had improved:

- their ability to solve problems associated with geography;
- their understanding of different cultures in Canada;
- their understanding of environmental issues.

How will the results of the review be used?

The individual schools involved in the review have been provided with their results.

The school boards involved in the review have also been provided with their results, as well as with suggestions for carrying out an analysis and interpretation of the results to use in program planning and local reporting.

The Ministry of Education has published this report card for Ontario and a detailed report to educators covering all aspects of the review.

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Graphs Comparing Data on Opportunity to Learn (OTL) and Student Achievement

Graphs 1 and 2 compare two aspects of the review in Canadian Studies—Geography, students' opportunity to learn the geographic concepts involved in the review (the first of each pair of bars) and student achievement (the second of each pair of bars). Graph 1 relates to the general-level course, and graph 2 to the advanced-level course.

Thus, for example, the first bar on graph 1 reveals that 79 per cent of the teachers indicated that they had taught the geography necessary for students to answer the questions related to content area A, involving "information about the local community". Similarly, the same graph shows that 55 per cent of the teachers indicated that they had taught the geography necessary for students to answer correctly the questions on skills area J, involving "the use of statistics in geography".

The second of each pair of bars on both graphs indicates student achievement. Thus, for example, graph 1 indicates that students correctly answered 58 per cent of the questions concerning content area B "the extent of Canada and its location in the world".

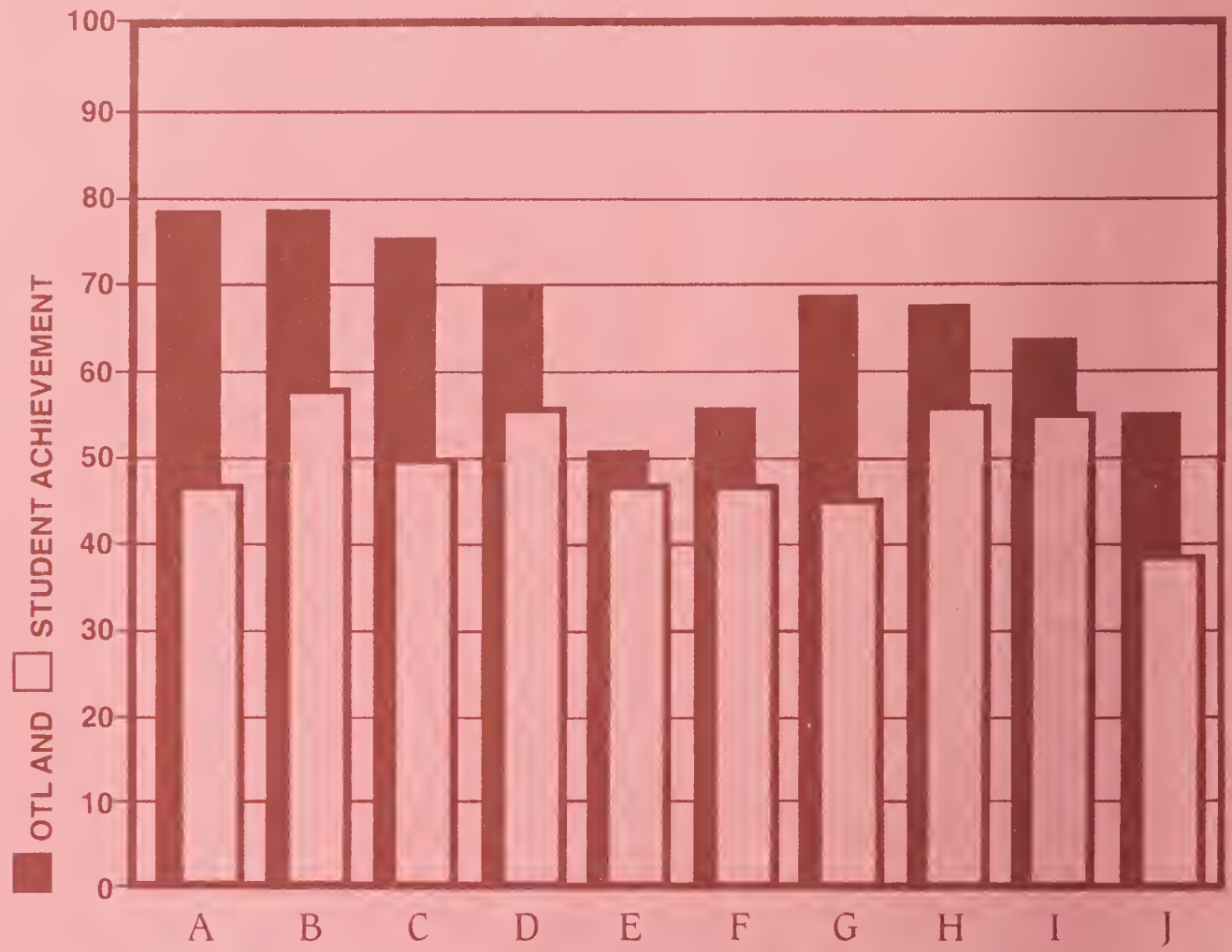
Content

A. information about the local community
B. the extent of Canada and its location in the world
C. the physical geography of Canada
D. Canada's renewable and non-renewable resources
E. the distribution of population within Canada
F. the relationships among transportation, industrialization, technology, and changes in society
G. energy supply in Canada

Skills

H. the use of topographic maps and air photographs
I. the construction of maps and graphs to illustrate various aspects of geography
J. the use of statistics in geography

Graph 1: General Level



Graph 2: Advanced Level